

IT Specialist GS-2210-7/9/11

I. INTRODUCTION

The incumbent in this position serves as an IT Specialist within PPQ in an assigned service delivery area nationwide for PPQ Emergency Programs such as Citrus Canker (CC), Asian Longhorn Beetle (ALB), Fruit Fly (FF), Emerald Ash Borer (EAB), and the like. The incumbent provides IT services to PPQ users in the work units located in this assigned service delivery area. This area will hereafter be referred to as the service delivery area.

II. DUTIES

- Takes a major role in the assessment and analysis of customer needs for IT applications, systems, and services based on customer interviews and requirements. Develops major portions of plans that specify the development and delivery of IT goods and services based on priorities established by the customers within the service delivery area. Participates with supervisor, program managers and others in the IT community in long and short-term planning related to acquisition and development of IT resources.
- Identifies and resolves a wide variety of large and small-scale problems with computer systems, equipment, and software, including those involving system integration and configuration management. Plans and carries out strategies to resolve problems and recover normal system operations, enlisting support and/or expertise from members of the other IT functional areas. Isolates the source of difficult or entrenched problems, and brings appropriate technical resources to bear on resolution of problems.
- Provides in-depth technical expertise for system capabilities, design features, staff and equipment requirements, data communications requirements, hardware, software, or operating systems capabilities and requirements. Modifies hardware, software, operating systems to meet user needs. Troubleshoots, diagnoses, and resolves hardware, software, operating systems, and data communications systems to maximize user effectiveness and efficiency. Keeps abreast of cutting edge technical advances and uses them to meet program objectives.
- Customizes computer applications to specific customer needs using a variety of operating systems, computer software packages, database management systems, utilities, and programming languages to enhance the customer's ability to process, collect copy, format, extract, transmit, and store data, produce reports, and maintain optimal system operability. Establishes procedures and strategies, makes departures from previously employed approaches to encompass and satisfy specialized or unusual requirements.
- Develops or adapts user guides for use by customers in the service delivery area. Trains personnel in the operation of systems or applications as they are implemented or as they are modified for more effective

operation. Works to improve computer literacy within the user community so they can more effectively use the information technology equipment, systems, and applications.

- Conducts technical assessments and provides advice regarding purchase for computer equipment, hardware, and software. Evaluates and recommends approval of specific IT procurement requests to insure customers are provided with the best available technology.
- Works with customers telephonically, in person to troubleshoot routine and unusual problems related to systems operations, platforms, telecommunications services such as E-mail, Internet access, use and applications of various hardware and software tools, etc. Works with customers with varying degrees of computer literacy to help them use their IT resources effectively.
- Works with customers, other IT personnel, and the APHIS Security Officer to maintain an effective information security program. Acts as a resource to document security violations, report violations to appropriate personnel, and work with customers to establish effective processes to protect agency resources.
- Is a member of the PPQ Customer Service team. Works with the geographically dispersed Customer Service Team to ensure effective support throughout the Region. Coordinates with other members of the IT community to ensure plans are in alignment with the agency initiatives and standards. This includes participating with the Regional Customer Service team to determine strategies and approaches for getting the work done, sharing strategies to resolve outstanding problems, and participating in teams to perform IT service for customers within the region.

Factor 1. Knowledge Required by the Position

The incumbent should have:

- In-depth knowledge of agency standards hardware, software, operating systems, security, telecommunications, peripherals, and procurement procedures;
- Knowledge of information management tools, programming languages, database management systems with in-depth knowledge of at least one programming language;
- Knowledge of a wide range of computer techniques, requirements, methods and procedures including approaches used by other agencies to develop solutions for complex user requirements or issues;
- Effective problem solving, and analytical skills, including project management skills and systems analysis methodologies and techniques;
- Effective writing skills to communicate with a wide range of audiences with varying levels of computer literacy;
- Effective listening, communicating, consulting, and negotiating skills to effectively meet customer needs;

- Ability to interpret technical documentation, operational procedures, and user instructions for the use of Agency standards hardware, software, and applications;
- Knowledge of APHIS, USDA, General Services Administration (GSA), National Institute of Standards Technology (NIST), National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA), Federal Information Resources Management regulations (FIRMR), and other policies, standards, guidelines, commonly accepted IT practices, and regulations in the IT and telecommunications areas.

Factor 2. Supervisory Controls

The incumbent reports to a PPQ IT Service Area Coordinator, who sets the overall direction for work to be performed based on input and consensus from the emergency program managers. The scope and nature of specific projects are determined by the supervisor, and on agency or unit objectives that are established by local, regional, or national IT management. The incumbent independently plans and performs assignments, resolving most conflicts that may arise. Completed work is reviewed for feasibility, compatibility with other work and with Agency standards, and effectiveness.

Factor 3. Guidelines

Guidelines consist of information gathered through direct observation of nationwide field operations, Agency IT standards, policy, and practices established by the regional or national IT management, AIP and AMT IT policy direction, vendor manuals, and instruction. These are very general in nature, and provide little guidance regarding the best way to accomplish the objectives of the Agency and the region. Precedents exist within the work now being performed in the IT arena, and these precedents should be followed when possible. However, there is still a great deal of latitude; the incumbent must exercise considerable judgment and initiative in the application of these guidelines.

Factor 4. Complexity

The work involves knowledge of diverse specialties in the information technology field, such as telecommunications, systems administration, application development, etc. and the application of these diverse specialties to accomplishing the work product. The incumbent must anticipate future changes in requirements, and perform the work so that future needs will be easily met.

The incumbent must assess unusual circumstances and must be able to incorporate variations in approach as required by the variations imposed by the customers. The work requires the integration of technical skills with project management and interpersonal skills to effectively consult with PPQ customers and use IT to further mission objectives. Coordination is required between the various Agency and program users of IT systems, the different functional areas of the Information Technology community, members of the Customer Service functional are within the Regional team, procurement officials, contractors, and vendors.

Factor 5. Scope and Effect

The work requires the independent investigation, validation, and assessment of a variety of unusual problems that impact program employees across several PPQ work units. The incumbent is expected to formulate plans, studies, or solutions that may substantially change the way people work. The work affects a wide range of agency activities across the entire region. It also impacts the PPQ employees' ability to be successful in meeting their objectives.

Factor 6. Personal Contacts

Contacts are with PPQ work unit employees, supervisors, Port Directors, State Plant Health Directors, State Agricultural Officials, area support personnel, technical and professional staff in the regional offices, members of the IT community, members of the IT Coordinating Staff, and various representatives of IT goods and services providers, vendors, hardware and software manufacturers, and the like.

Factor 7. Purpose of Contacts

The purpose of contacts is to provide advice and counsel managers and other technology users, sustain relationships with and elicit participation from other IT community members at all levels within and outside APHIS, identify IT needs, assess requirements and capabilities of computer hardware and software, communicate the IT needs within the service delivery area, affect Agency IT policy, develop training methods and strategies, and resolve operational problems.

Factor 8. Physical Demands

The work is primarily sedentary, although lifting of desktop computers and peripherals may be required. Some travel throughout the service delivery area is required.

Factor 9. Work Environment

The work is performed in an office setting, at the work unit. Provision of IT service to customers in the service delivery area may entail working in restricted and secure areas.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:

This position has been identified as a high risk public trust position which requires a "Background Investigation" with secret access to classified information based on Executive Orders 12968 and 12958. Both of which, are on file at the Department and Agency level. The following OPM forms are required: the incumbent's application form (i.e., OF-612 or Resume), Questionnaire for National Security Positions (SF-

86), Fingerprint Chart (SF-87), Fair Credit Reporting Act Form, and Declaration of Federal Employment (OF-306).